

News Release

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King County building permit agency now more customer-friendly with new name, new location and better service

DDES is now the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review

The final step in a major customer-focused transformation of King County's building permitting agency comes Oct. 23 when the newly renamed Permitting and Environmental Review department opens for business in Snoqualmie.

"Our reform of DDES continues with new customer-service measures, a move to Snoqualmie to be closer to its rural customer base, and a new name that plainly says what it does -- the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review," said King County Executive Dow Constantine in his 2013-14 Executive Proposed Budget address.

The Metropolitan King County Council unanimously approved the name change Sept. 10. The Renton office that was the long-time home to the former Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) closes permanently at noon, Friday, Oct. 19.

The new location is more centrally located for customers since the department has evolved to become primarily a rural-services agency with a much lower staffing level to match its reduced customer base. The move to Snoqualmie is expected to save \$1 million a year.

"I have so much respect and admiration for our employees who spearheaded the problem-solving that has resulted in remarkable improvements for our customers," said John Starbard, director of Permitting and Environmental Review.

The office space at the new Snoqualmie headquarters has been designed to create a more efficient, collaborative, and transparent environment which will be more customer-friendly as people conduct business with Permitting and Environmental Review staff.

The transformation of the department began in 2010 and used a LEAN process where staff developed dramatic system improvements. The result includes overthe-counter permits issued within two hours instead of two weeks; fixed fees for service so customers have certainty about costs; new computer software that

provides more online services and coordinates customer interaction with multiple departments such as Public Health and County Roads; and real time data transmitted from the field.

There will be no counter service on Monday, Oct. 22; however, many services will be available online at http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits.aspx

The schedule for the move to Snoqualmie is:

Noon, Friday, Oct. 19 Renton Office closed permanently

Monday, Oct. 22 No counter service, some services available online

7:30 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 23 New Snoqualmie Office opens for business

Regular office hours will be: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The new address is:

35030 S.E. Douglas St., Ste. 210, Snoqualmie, WA

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King County provides regional services to nearly 2-million residents including 250,000 people living in unincorporated areas. Services include Metro transit, public health, wastewater treatment, courts, jails, prosecutors, public defenders, community and social services, the King County International Airport, and local services such as police protection, roads service, and solid waste transfer station and landfill services, plus more than 26,000 acres of parks and natural lands, and 175 miles of regional trails. King County is the 14th largest county in the nation by population, and covers 2,134 square miles, 39 cities, 760 lakes and reservoirs, and six major river systems with 3,000 miles of streams.